

WORKING WITH...

A SUPPORT WORKER



Support workers, sometimes called keyworkers, as usually appointed by statutory, private or voluntary/community sector organisations. Where a support worker is employed directly by a person, they are usually referred to as a personal assistant. For the purposes of this policy, we will refer to any support worker, including advocacy services that are supplied by an organisation as a Support Worker and anyone who is employed directly by an individual will be referred to as a Personal Assistant.

Support workers or personal assistants provide help with many aspects that might act as a barrier to accessing services. This can range from assistance in communicating or understanding what you're saying, through to a mental health advocate who can aid a person in understanding the information that you are providing, help to express the implications of certain decisions that the individual may take, and ensure that the legal rights of the individual are considered throughout any process.

The first thing is to ensure that the room you book is large enough to accommodate all attendees, including the person's support worker. Think about the layout of the room. The type of support worker attending may influence who should sit where.

There may be occasions where a client and the support worker have not previously had the opportunity to meet. Therefore, in these circumstances, you may want to allow them to get together privately before any meeting to enable them to ascertain how they would like to communicate. Also, a person may use equipment in order to communicate through their support worker. In these circumstances, it may be necessary for the support worker to check that they understand how this equipment works. Where a person is bringing a support worker, you are advised to check with them if they would like you to provide some time before your meeting. This is not as much of a

consideration when a client is going to be bringing a personal assistant but it may be worth checking as there may be particular considerations when dealing with legal matters.

When a client has a support worker or personal assistant that is helping with communication barriers, i.e. speaking on the person's behalf, they will most likely use the 'I' pronoun. This does not mean these are the support worker's or personal assistant's words or opinions necessarily. When responding, it is courteous to use the pronoun 'you' and always to look at the person you are speaking to and not the support worker or personal assistant when speaking. If you are unfamiliar with working with support workers or personal assistants, this can seem uncomfortable or even rude to seemingly ignore the support worker or personal assistant. This is quite natural and not addressing the support worker or personal assistant when speaking to the client will not cause any offence.

This guide can also be provided in Braille, audio cassette disk, large print or other languages on request by phoning 01935 385240

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Ta broszura jest dostępna w języku polskim, poprzez kontakt telefoniczny 01935 385240

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